

AMENDMENT TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please insert the following paragraph after page 8, line 5, as follows:

Fig. 3A is an enlarged broken top view of a right-hand volar plate according to the invention, shown with pegs and screws and reference lines;

Please rewrite the previously amended paragraph at page 12 , line 1, as follows:

Referring specifically to Figs. 3,3A and 4, according to a further preferred aspect of the invention, the plate 102 is provided with body alignment holes 150, proximal head alignment holes 152a, 152b, 152c (generally 152), and a distal head alignment hole 154, each sized to closely accept standard Kirschner wires (K-wires), e.g., 0.7 – 1.2 mm in diameter. All the alignment holes 150, 152, 154 are substantially smaller in diameter (e.g., by thirty to fifty percent) than the shafts of screws 104 (approximately 3.15 mm in diameter) and the shafts of pegs 106, 108 (approximately 2.25 mm in diameter). The body alignment holes 150 are longitudinally displaced along the body portion 116 and provided at an oblique angle (preferably approximately 70°, as shown in Fig. 5) relative to the lower surface 158 of the body portion 116. As shown best in Fig. 3A, the The proximal head alignment holes 152 alternate with the peg holes 134 along line L₁ in a medial-lateral direction transverse to the proximal-distal orientation of the axis A extending through the body portion. Each alignment hole 152 is located between two immediately adjacent peg holes 134 with each alignment hole being located entirely within a boundary that may be defined by a tangent T₁ to a proximalmost point on circumferences of the two immediately adjacent peg holes, a tangent T₂ to a distalmost point on the circumferences of the two immediately adjacent peg holes, a tangent T₃ to a lateralmost point on the circumference of a medialmost of the immediately adjacent peg

holes, and a tangent T₄ to a medialmost point on the circumference of a lateralmost of the two immediately adjacent peg holes. The proximal boundary line may alternatively be defined as a line X₁ extending between the proximalmost points of the two immediately adjacent peg holes and the distal boundary may alternatively be defined as a line X₂, extending between the distalmost points of the two immediately adjacent peg holes. In the embodiment shown, for n peg holes 134 (e.g., four) in said first set, a substantially linear arrangement of n-1 proximal head alignment holes (i.e., three) is provided.

Referring particularly to Fig. 4, a [[A]] tangent line H to the distalmost points of the head alignment holes 152 is preferably substantially coincident or closely parallel with a line tangent to points on the circumferences of the shafts of pegs 106 inserted through holes 134 adjacent the head portion 118 of the plate 102. The tangent line H is not distally displaced relative to a tangent line defined along distalmost points of two adjacent peg holes. Referring to Figs. 3 and 4, with respect to the proximal head alignment holes, it is appreciated that a shaft 106a of a peg is generally smaller in diameter than a head 106b of a peg (Fig. 6). Thus, a line tangent to the peg holes 134 (each sized for receiving the head 106b of peg 106) will be closely located, but parallel, to a line tangent to a distalmost point on the respective alignment hole 152. Nevertheless, for purposes of the claims, both (i) a tangent line which is preferably substantially coincident with a line tangent to points on the circumferences of the shafts of pegs and (ii) a tangent line to a set of peg holes shall be considered to be “substantially coincident” with a line tangent to a distalmost point of an alignment hole 152. Axes through alignment holes 152 preferably generally approximate (within, e.g., 3°) the angle of an axis of an adjacent peg hole 134. Distal head alignment hole 154 is provided between the central and radial-side peg holes

138, and has a circular upper opening, and a laterally oblong lower opening, as shown best in Fig. 6.